

FY 06 Budget Reconciliation Bill- December 19, 2005

Rep. Slaughter leads Rules debate on the FY 06 Budget Reconciliation Bill

December 19, 2005

M. Speaker,

I'm sad and disappointed to say that the content of this budget, and the way we are approaching it, confirms the fears of the American people, instead of their hopes.

The bill Republicans reported just a few hours ago is a bill no one has seen, but one that will have a far-reaching impact on the future of this country.

We don't know everything it does, and yet we are being asked to vote on it before the ink is even dry.

Our form of government requires the trust of the people - a trust that this leadership has not earned.

Being asked to take the federal budget on faith, in a year when the Majority has itself lost faith in the values that matter most to our democracy -

- integrity, honesty, and openness...

That is asking too much.

One thing we do know about this budget is that its very foundation is fundamentally dishonest.

The majority has titled it the "Deficit Reduction Act," when the facts clearly show that the bill, when combined with the Republican tax giveaway to the rich...

...will actually increase the deficit by billions of dollars.

Supporters will also claim that they have addressed criticisms of this legislation, but they aren't being honest, either.

It is true that the Leadership was shamed by the public, by Democrats, and even by Members of its own Party, into abandoning some of its most egregious attacks on the less fortunate.

But the fact remains that this bill still takes over one billion dollars from child support services.

It cuts federal student aid by 14.3 billion dollars, so that our nation's children will find it harder to go to college and realize their dreams.

And it slashes Medicaid by five billion dollars, putting health care for those who need it further out of reach.

The budget does this all while adding to our deficit and giving away tens of billions of dollars to the rich and the super rich in

tax-cuts...Dramatic cuts that middle class Americans won't share in, but will be asked to pay for.

Is this really what our constituents sent us here to do? To spend the Holliday season taking from the needy so that we can give even more to those who need gifts the least?

M. Speaker, this year has repeatedly shown us the consequences of poor leadership...

We saw a natural disaster turn into a national tragedy because of a failed government response, casting doubt on our readiness to respond to future challenges.

We saw self-interest run amok, as top lawmakers violated the people's trust and were indicted and forced to step down in the wake of scandal.

We saw our troops and the people of Iraq struggle heroically to lift not just the weight of a vicious insurgency, but also the burden of poor planning and unfulfilled promises from the White House.

And here again today, the American people will be made victims of unscrupulous, disingenuous leadership.

On the opening day of the 109th Congress, almost 1 year ago, the first act of this Republican Leadership was to try and destroy the House Ethics Committee under the guise of ethical reform.

Unfortunately, my colleagues in the Majority seem committed to ending this session of Congress on the same sad note with which they began it...

...by employing unacceptable, unprecedented tactics and by trying to deceive the American people out of pure, political self interest, at the expense of this body and of our shared American values.

We simply cannot afford another year like this last one. We need to start investing in America's future, not letting those in power invest only in their friends at America's expense.

It is time for real reform, for real integrity, for real leadership.

It's time for real change.

Together, America can do better than what this budget reconciliation and this Majority Party is offering us here today.